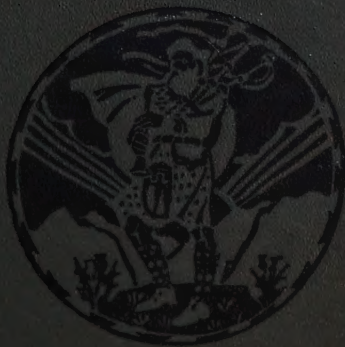


IN THE COUNTRY PLACES

CHARLES MURRAY





417
(1920)
110

James Luke

Dec: 1920.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HAMEWITH

(Seventeenth Impression)

SOUGH O' WAR

CONSTABLE & CO. LTD.

IN THE COUNTRY PLACES

BY

CHARLES MURRAY

"In the highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens
Quiet eyes."

R. L. S.

CONSTABLE & COMPANY LTD.
LONDON

First published 1920.

TO

G. W. S. W. AND I. W.

NOTE

SOME of these verses appeared originally in 'The Aberdeen University Review,' 'The Odd Volume,' 'Country Life,' 'Scottish Country Life,' 'The Cairngorm Club Journal,' 'The British Weekly,' and 'The Graphic.'

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IT WASNA HIS WYTE

It wasna his wyte he was beddit sae late
An' him wi' sae muckle to dee,
He'd the rabbits to feed an' the fulpie to kame
An' the hens to hish into the ree ;
The mason's mear syne he set up in the closs
An' coupit the ladle fu' keen,
An' roon the ruck foun's wi' the lave o' the loons
Played " Takie " by licht o' the meen.
Syne he rypit his pooches an' coontit his bools,
The reed-cheekit pitcher an' a',
Took the yirlin's fower eggs fae his bonnet, an', fegs,
When gorbelt't they're fykie to blaw ;
But furth cam' his mither an' cried on him in,
Tho' sairly he priggit to wait—
" The'll be nae wird o' this in the mornin', my laad "—
But it wasna his wyte he was late.

" Och hey ! " an' " Och hum ! " he was raxin' himsel'
An' rubbin' his een when he raise,
" An' faur was his bonnet an' faur was his beets
An' fa had been touchin' his claes ?
Ach ! his porritch was caul', they'd forgotten the saut,
There was owre muckle meal on the tap.
Was this a' the buttermilk, faur was his speen,
An' fa had been bitin' his bap ? "

His pints wasna tied, an' the backs o' his lugs
Nott some sma' attention as weel—
But it wasna as gin it was Sabbath, ye ken,
An' onything does for the squeel.
Wi' his piece in his pooch he got roadit at last,
Wi' his beuks an' his skaalie an' sklate,
Gin the wag-at-the-wa' in the kitchie was slaw—
Weel, it wasna his wyte he was late.

The fite-fuskered cat wi' her tail in the air
Convoyed him as far as the barn,
Syne, munchin' his piece, he set aff by his leen,
Tho' nae very willin', I'se warn'.
The cairt road was dubby, the track throu' the wid,
Altho' maybe langer was best,
But when loupin' the dyke a steen-chackert flew oot,
An' he huntit a fyle for her nest.
Syne he cloddit wi' yowies a squirrel he saw
Teetin' roon fae the back o' a tree,
An' jinkit the "Gamie," oot teeming his girns—
A ragie aul' billie was he.
A' this was a hinner; an' up the moss side
He ran noo at siccan a rate
That he fell i' the heather an' barkit his shins,
Sae it wasna his wyte he was late.

Astride on a win'-casten larick he sat
An' pykit for rosit to chaw,
Till a pairtrick, sair frichtened, ran trailin' a wing
Fae her cheepers to tryst him awa'.

He cried on the dryster when passin' the mull,
Got a lunt o' his pipe an' a news,
An' his oxter pooch managed wi' shillans to full—
A treat to tak' hame till his doos.
Syne he waded the lade an' crap under the brig
To hear the gigs thunner abeen,
An' a rotten plumped in an' gaed sweemin' awa'
Afore he could gaither a steen.
He hovered to herrie a foggie bees' byke
Nae far fae the mole-catcher's gate,
An' the squeel it was in or he'd coontit his stangs—
But it wasna his wyte he was late.

He tried on his taes to creep ben till his seat,
But the snuffy aul' Dominie saw,
Sneekit there in his dask like a wyver that waits
For a flee in his wob on the wa' ;
He tell't o' his tum'le, but fat was the eese
Wi' the mannie in sic an ill teen,
An' fat was a wap wi' a spainyie or tag
To hands that were hard as a steen ?
Noo, gin he had grutten, it's brawly he kent
Foo croose a' the lassies would crawl,
For the mornin' afore he had scattered their lames,
An' dung doon their hoosies an' a'.
Wi' a gully to hooie tho', soon he got ower
The wye he'd been han'led by fate,
It was coorse still an' on to be walloped like thon,
When it wasna his wyte he was late.

*It's thirty year, said ye, it's forty an' mair,
Sin' last we were licket at squeel ;
The Dominie's deid, an' forgotten for lang,
An' a' oor buik learnin' as weel.
The size o' a park—wi' the gushets left oot—
We'll guess geyan near, I daur say ;
Or the wecht o' a stot, but we wouldna gyang far
Gin we tried noo the coontin' in " Gray."
" Effectual Callin' " we canna rin throu'
Wha kent it aince clear as the text,
We can say " Man's Chief En' " an' the shorter " Com-
mands,"
But fat was the " Reasons Annexed " ?
Oor heads micht be riddels for a' they haud in
O Catechis, coontin' or date,
Yet I'll wauger we min' on the mornin's lang syne
When it wasna oor wyte we were late.*

A CHEERY GUID-NICHT

Noo I've sattled the score, an' the gig's at the door,

An' the shaltie is kittle to ca',

Aye the langer we sit we're the sweirer to flit,

Sae it's time to be wearin' awa'.

A douce eller like me, an example maun be,

An' it wouldna be seemly ava

Stottin' hame in day-licht, an' jist think o' the sicht

Supposin' we happened to fa'.

Ye're weel-slockened noo, an' afore ye get fou

Be guided by me an' say " Na " ;

By my tongue ye can tell I've had plenty mysel',

Sae a cheery guid-nicht to you a'.

A cheery guid-nicht, ay, a cheery guid-nicht,

A cheery guid-nicht to you a',

By my sang ye can tell I've had plenty mysel',

Sae a cheery guid-nicht to you a'.

Rowe graavits weel roon, an' your bonnets rug doon,

Syne set the door wide to the wa',

An' the gig that's in front is the safest to mount,

Gin the dram gars you trow there is twa.

O it's little we care gin the furth it be fair,

Or mochie or makin' for snaw,

Gin it's frosty an' clear we can lippen the mear,

Gin it's dubby the safter the fa'.

Noo roadit for hame there's some I could name
Nae freely sae croose i' the craw,
For they've wives like mysel' an' the lees we maun tell
Blauds the tail o' a nicht for us a'.

It blauds a guid nicht, ay, it blauds a guid nicht,
When the wives winna swallow them a',
Tho' for peace ye may tell a bit lee like mysel'
Here's a hindmost guid-health to them a'.

SPRING

SPRING at last comes blawin' in,
Sandy's rankin' oot his wan'.
Lowse the kye an' lat them rin !
Spring at last comes blawin' in,
See the yallow on the whin,
Pu' yon raggit-robin, man !
Spring at last comes blawin' in,
Sandy's rankin' oot his wan'.

WINTER

Noo that cauldribe Winter's here
 There's a pig in ilka bed,
Kindlin's scarce an' coals is dear ;
Noo that cauldribe Winter's here
Doddy mittens we maun wear,
 Butter skites an' winna spread ;
Noo that cauldribe Winter's here
 There's a pig in ilka bed.

STILL, MAN, STILL

HE's nae to ride the water on,
For fear he coup the creel ;
He's never mowse to meddle wi'
I ken't ower weel ;
He's aften deen a neiper doon
That never did him ill,
He may get grey but never gweed,—
An' still, man, still,

I've kent him lift anither's birn
When better men were laith,
An' wi' a nicht-boun' beggar share
Biel an' brose baith.
When stirks were doon an' rents were due
I've kent him back a bill
That kept a peer man in his craft,—
But still, man, still,

I dinna doot the story's true,
Ae Sabbath he was heard
Gyaun whustlin' doon the larick belt
Like some roch caird ;
He's never taen a token yet—
Suspicious an' ye will
Whaur a' gang forrit aince a year,—
An' still, man, still,

STILL, MAN, STILL

Nae winter but a starvin' wife
Comes for the bow o' meal,
His onwal wauger laid an' won
At some bonspiel ;
To bleeze the burn an' spear a fish
There's few that hae his skill,
An' nane like him can busk a heuck,—
But still, man, still,

Nicht after nicht till a' the oors
At catch-the-ten he'll sit,
At singin' orra strouds o' sangs
There's few mair fit.
I've heard him fae the laird himsel'
Refuse an offered gill,
Nae honest man but tak's his dram,—
An' still, man, still,

When ye uphaud or I misca'
There's aye the tither side,
An' whiles the very best o' us
Would some things hide ;
We're maistly a' a mixture, man,
Like pasture on the hill,
Whaur tufts o' girse an' scrogs o' breem
Raise stoot tups still.

GIN I WAS GOD

GIN I was God, sittin' up there abeen,
Weariet nae doot noo a' my darg was deen,
Deaved wi' the harps an' hymns oonendin' ringin',
Tired o' the flockin' angels hairse wi' singin',
To some clood-edge I'd daunder furth an', feth,
Look ower an' watch hoo things were gyaun aneth.
Syne, gin I saw hoo men I'd made mysel'
Had startit in to pooshan, sheet an' fell,
To reive an' rape, an' fairly mak' a hell
O' my braw birlin' Earth,—a hale week's wark—
I'd cast my coat again, rowe up my sark,
An', or they'd time to lench a second ark,
Tak' back my word an' sen' anither spate,
Droon oot the hale hypothec, dicht the sklata,
Own my mistak', an,' aince I'd cleared the brod,
Start a'thing owre again, gin I was God.

THE HILLS AN' HER

By nicht, by day, my dream's the same,
The warl' at peace an' me at hame,
Awa' fae danger, din an' stir,
Back to the quiet hills an' Her.
Her an' the hills, wi' me to share,
An' Heaven itsel' micht weel be there.

A bower o' birks,—O happy dream !—
A wee hoose happit owre wi' breem,
A window to the Wast, a neuk
Weel-cushioned by the fire, a beuk
O' sangs—the sangs I canna sing,
For aye as throu' my hairt they ring
I lift my heid, an' lose the line,
To meet the een that's waitin' mine.

A gairden sweet wi' bud an' bell,
A windin' path, a mossy well
That starts a burn that tumbles on
To sink saft-oxtered safe in Don.
A scuff o' rain, a whirrin' reel,
An' lang or dark a heapit creel :—
Wi' routh o' flies an' souple wan'
What fisher ever envied man ?
An' caller trout, what better dish
Could only couthie couple wish ?

Weel-bunkered links, a partner keen,
A putt for't on the hin'most green :—
Ay, but it's fine hoo dreams contrive
To gie guid golfers back their drive,
Put doon new ba's at ilka tee,
An' gobble Bogey fives in three.
Throu' mavis-haunted plantins then
While gloamin' steals oot owre the glen,
An' leanin' on the gate I see
The sweet-eyed lass that looks for me.

What's left o' life, thus, there I'd pass.
I dreamt the place, I ken the lass.

IN LYTHE STRATHDON

Seldom a simmer passed but him an' me
 Amang the hills had some fine cheery days,
 Up Nochtyside or throu' the Cabrach braes,
Doon the Lord's Throat, an' ootower Bennachie;
There wasna mony bare hill-heads onkent to him an' me.

Never nae mair. I wander noo my leen,
 An' he's been beddit lang in far Peronne;
 Here, whaur his forbears lie in lythe Strathdon,
I lay the stag-moss that I pu'ed yestreen—
Laurels fae Lonach, where I range oor auld hill tracks my leen.

HORACE, CAR. I. 34

PARCUS DEORUM

I hadna crossed the Aul' Kirk door for mony a year an' day ;
Quo' I, " When a'thing's fore-ordained it's little eese to pray ; "
But noo when Sunday mornin' comes I hearken for the bell,
An' few set oot in runkl'd blacks mair eager than mysel'.

For God Almichty in the past micht fyles forget his ain
When craps were connached noo an' than wi' weet or want o'
rain ;

But, Sirs ! o' late, while hoastin' men are warslin' wi' the flu,
Frail wives in soakit shawls an' sheen are stervin' i' the queue.

An' owre the sea it's waur than that. The Marne is rinnin' reid,
The lang canals an' saughy burns are dammed wi' German deid ;
An' bonny Wipers, braw Louvain, an' France's fairest touns,
Cathedrals, hospitals an' a' are levelled to the founs.

But noo the Kaiser an' his Kings are skirtin' fae the lan' ;
They seen got youkie roon the chouks when God put tee a han' ;
An' Fortune like an aeroplane comes loopin' doon the blue,
An' kills a Czar to place in pooer some raggit Russian Jew.

HORACE, CAR. I. 9

VIDES UT ALTA STET NIVE CANDIDUM SORACTE

Drift oxter-deep haps Bennachie,
Aneth its birn graens ilka tree,
The frost-boun' burn nae mair is free
To bicker by.

Haud on the peats an' fleg the cauld,
An' ere the hoast gets siccar hauld
Yon luggit pig o' fower year auld
Sall first gang dry.

On Providence oor cares we'll cast,
The power that stirs will lay the blast
When larch an' rodden firm an' fast
Will stand ance mair.

Whatever comes we'll grip the day,
It's oors to drink an' dance an' play,
The morn can bring us what it may
Grey heads or sair.

Let gloamin' find us wooers still
True to oor trysts by haugh or hill,
The lassie's lauch will guide you till
She's catch'd an' kiss't.

Syne thieve her brooch or slip wi' care
The ribbon fae her touzled hair,
Half-heartit struggles but declare
She'll never miss't.

“ THE GLEN IS MINE ! ”

“ THE Glen is mine ! ” “ The Glen is mine ! ” I hear the piper
vaunting,

I see the streaming tartan as he wheels upon the green,
And with the tripling of the tune old memories come haunting,
But never can the Glen be mine as once it might have been.

O long-lost Youth, how clearly once that braggart spring you
fingered,

How sure the chanter’s promise then,—sweet reeds now
ever dumb ;

The careless days, the merry nights when still you piped and
lingered,

Nor heard the broad insistent road that ever whispered
“ Come.”

O years misspent, O wasted years, in clachans of the stranger,
Where gold alone was spoken of, and what red gold could
buy,

And now the envied treasure’s won, forgot the toil and danger,
And all the country-side is mine as far as meets the eye.

The farms are mine, the moors are mine, the mountains and
the waters,

The castle and the little crofts, the cattle on the brae ;
But where the dark-haired sons of mine, the fair, the blue-
eyed daughters ?

For all I own I wander lone a childless chief the day.

If she were here, if she were here, the stranger maid I'm
minding,

The little maid I weary for, the maid I'm loving still,
Then all that with my youth I lost, again I would be finding,
And I'd be rich if she were mine, tho' herding on the hill.

For what is fame, an ancient name, broad haughs of corn,
or money?

I'd give them all for youth again, to wed a Southron bride,
If I could share a plaid with her, and girdle cakes and honey,
Not only would the Glen be mine but all the world beside.

"The Glen is mine!" Dear love that was, I hear you in the
vaunting,

I see you on the mountains, and I meet you on the moors,
When gloaming comes, each cave and crag, each field and
stream you're haunting.

Heath, haugh and pine, they may be mine; the Glen, the
Glen is yours!

THE THREE CRAW

*The fusslin' halflin's hingin' in an' tittin' at the reyns
To gar the stot straucht up the theats mair aiven wi' the mear ;—
He winna scutter lang at hame wi' beasts an' brose an' queyns
He lifts his kist for Canada gin Whitsunday was here.*

Three weary craws are croakin' on the larick by the style,
An' dichtin', till the win' gings doon, their nibs upo' their taes,
They hinna had their craps sae fu' o' barley for a fyle
For they've been happin' hard ahin' the harrow noo for days.

Quo' the ae black crow, "Faith it's time we wan awa',
The grieve is wearin' doon the dyke afore it's time to lowse."

Says the tither black crow, "Ay we'll better no be slaw,
Or we'll never see oor gorbels,—wi a gun he isna mowse."

But the third crow leuch, he was young an' young aneuch :
"Ye are twa silly deevils, easy chaetit, easy fleyed,
That's a bokie weel-a-wat, an' a peer attemp' at that,
Your ringel een were bleared afore, but noo they're gettin'
gleyed."

Syne they argued for a bit, but the birkie wadna flit,
He was young an' he was clever, Heely, heely, they would see ;
Wi' his din they didna hear till the grieve cam creepin'
near
An' banged wi' baith his barrels at the bourach on the tree.

But the earock sailed awa', nae a feather touched ava',
Left his twa mislipped neepers lyin' kickin' fu' o' leed.

An' he gied a lood guffaw, " They were richt than efter a' ;
They were aul' an' they were wily, but it's them 'at noo are
deid."

*Some threep the moral's this, " Ye'll ging never sair amiss
Gin ye hearken wi' a ready lug when aulder fouks advise."*

*But it is, I think mysel', " Noo an' than tho' lear may tell,
It's better to be lucky aye, than sometimes to be wise."*

THE BRAW LASS

THE lassie was braw, O the lassie was braw,
Wi' rings an' wi' brooches an' bracelets an' a',
An' chains hingin' doon like a wag-at-the-wa'.

O wasna she braw?

Her frock was o' silk, ay an' braidit at that,
Wi' fur an' wi' feathers she buskit her hat,
Yet unco sma comfort they brocht her awat
As ilka lang gloamin' sae lanely she sat,

Nae lads cam' to ca'.

She gabbit in German, but whaur was the need?
In Buchan braid Scots comes a hantle mair speed:
She paintit fine pictures, but catch her black-leed

The swye or the pat.

On Sundays she sang like a lark in the choir,
But seldom she blaudit her sheen in the byre,
An, tho' sampler like hers wasna seen in the shire,
When it cam' to clout moleskins at nicht by the fire

Her mither did that.

The lassie grew weary, the lassie grew sad,
It's hard to be bonnie an' no hae a lad,
An' a wee sharger collie was a' that she had

To cuddle at e'en.

For mùsic an' beuks are baith weel in their wye,
But a lass in the glen maun hae something forbye,
Some luck wi' the chuckens an' skeel amo' kye,
Or in spite o' her learnin' she's likely to lie
A lifetime her leen.

She wearied a' winter but jist afore Pase
The gowkit fee'd 'oman when teemin' the aise
Cam' clyte in the midden—a bonnie like place—
An' twisted a queet ;
Wark had to gang on, sae the lass buckled to,
She lowsed for the mill an' she trampit the soo,
There was little to strip when she milkit a coo,
An', sirs ! sic a bakin's the queynie put thro'—
Her scones were a treat.

She hadna her marra at chessel or churn,
Nae washin' like hers ever bleached by the burn,
Fae seed time to shearin' she aye took her turn
An' blythe as a bird.

The snod spottit vrapper an' wincey she wore
Jist gied her the glamour she wanted afore ;
An' lang ere we'd clyack she'd woosers galore,
In gigs by the dizzen, on shalts by the score,
A' waitin' her wurd.

A towmond come Tyseday the lassie's been wad,
An' wha would jaloose that she'd ever been sad ?
While lucky, I'se warran', he thinks him, the lad
That won her awa'.

THE BRAW LASS

The cradle's been rockin' a fortnicht, an' noo
When gloamin' has set "Himsel' " free fae the ploo,
She shanks by his side an' sings "Hushie-ba-loo,"
As happy's the kitlin that plays wi' her clew.

Gweed's better than braw.

THE IMMORTAL MEMORY

GREENOCK BURNS CLUB, 1913

AULD Scotia, since that Janwar' win'
Rare hansel on your bard blew in—
Tho' mony a wintry blast has frayed
The fringes o' your tartan plaid—
Your sons hae borne your banner far,
Still first in peace, no' last in war,
Till noo in mony a distant land
The march-stanes o' your kingdom stand.
Yet aye the ranger's heart's the same,
An' dunts in tune wi' oors at hame,
Bound fast in spite o' land an' sea
By "Burns' Immortal Memory."

HERACLITUS

They taul' me, Heraclitus, that ye had worn awa' :
I grat to mind hoo aft we ca'd the crack atween the twa
Until the heark'nin' sun gaed doon new-weary i' the Wast :
An' noo for lang ye're in the mools, whaur a' maun lie at last.
Still, still they pipe your mavis, though sair the Makkar's
miss't,
For Death that coffins a' the lave your sangs can never kist.

THO' I BE AUL'

YE needna think tho' I be aul',
An' a' my bonnet haps is grey,
My heart is grizzen, crined or caul'
An' never kens a dirl the day.

A bonny lass can stir me still
As deep's her mither did when young,
An' aul' Scots sang my saul can fill
As fu's when first I heard it sung.

Gin throu' the muir ahin' the dogs
I'dinna lift my feet sae clean
As swacker lads that loup the bogs,
I'll wear them doon afore we're deen.

I ken some differ wi' the dram,
Ae mutchkin starts me singin' noo,
But winds are tempered to the lamb,
An' I get a' the cheaper fu'.

An open lug, a gyangin' fit,
Altho' they've never filled my kist,
Hae brocht me wisdom whiles an' wit
Worth mair than a' the siller miss't.

An', faith, the ferlies I hae seen,
The ploys I've shared an' daurna tell
Cheer mony a lanely winter's e'en,
Just kecklin' owre them to mysel'.

There's some hae looks, there's mair hae claes,
That's but the brods, the beuk's the thing,
The heart that keeps for dreary days
Some weel-remembered merry spring.

Then ca' me fey or ca' me feel,
Clean daft or doitit, deil may care,
Aye faur there's fun, at Pase or Yeel,
Gin I be livin' I'll be there.

“ AIBERDEEN AWA' ! ”

(To the Aberdeen University Club of South Africa.)

O SAIR forfochen here wi' heat
I weary for the wind an' weet
An' drivin' drift in Union Street
 Fae th' Duke to Baubie Law.
Then mak' my bed in Aiberdeen
An' tak' me back; I'll no compleen
Tho' a' my life I lie my leen
 In Aiberdeen awa'.

I fain would dook in Dee aince mair
An' clatter doon the Market stair,
—O the caller dilse an' partans there!
 The fish-wives' mutches braw!
Neth Marischal's spire or King's auld croon,
In hodden gray or scarlet goon,
For future fechts we laid the foun'
 In Aiberdeen awa'.

In mony an unco airt I've been,
An' mony a gallant city seen,
Yet here the nicht we'll drink to een
 Can vaunt it ower them a'.
They say! They say! Fat say they than?
Weel, jist e'en lat them say, my man.

While, clean caup oot an' hand in han'
 Here's “ Aiberdeen Awa' ! ”

WHEN LOVE FLEW IN

UNSOCHT, unseen, when Love flew in
An' landit there on Leebie's lap,
Wha could believe the bairn was blin',
His choice but just a lucky hap?

Syne tho' we ran to steek the door
An' clip his wings, wee, wand'rin' waif,
We'd seen furhooied maids afore,
An' wondered gin she had him safe.

Sae lest the little lass think lang,
Herdin' him ilka nicht her leen,
Till life be by we've thirled to gang—
Leebie an' me wi' Love between.

LOVE AND LAUGHTER

I ROWED a lassie i' my plaid,
A cosy bield in weety weather,
An' aye she kissed me back an' said
" It's fine to love an' lauch thegether."

O kind, sae kind, was she yestreen,
But lassies' hearts are ill to tether,
An' here I herd the yowes my leen,
Flung weary on the drookit heather.

Happy an' happit, Heaven above
Let her be that, I'll thole the weather ;
Gie her the laughter, me the love,
Gin ne'er again the twa thegether.

ISIE

ISIE, my lass, when ye gyang to the byre at nicht,
Wi' the lucky cogue that cuddles aneth your airm,
In well-filled wrapper an' goon preened back sae ticht,
There never was yet your marrow about the fairm.

An' syne when the milkin's by, an' the fire-hoose clean,
An' ye daunder oot for a breath o' the gloamin' air,
Ye dinna get far throu' the stibble or ley your leen,
The laads are loupin' the dykes to kepp you there.

The horsemen are hingin' about to see you pass,
The baillie's hairt is duntin' aneth his sark,
The yowes are left to wander at will, my lass,
There's that about *you* that disna gyang weel wi' wark.

The herd may lauch at the laads wi' their lowin' een,
But ye'll seen hae him i' the branks wi' the lave, awat,
Ye gied him a kiss to kitchie his piece the streen,
An' wersh is his mornin' brose when he thinks o' that.

The orra man's auld, an' he creeps to the stable laft
An' a cauld caff bed, but we ken wha he's thinkin' on,
Lowsin' his beets in the dark, when he's whisperin' saft
"The nichts are short gin ye dream o' a lass like yon."

It hurts me whiles when I think ye've had laads afore,
But ye winna forget, my lass, what ye've promised noo,
An' ye'll be there wi' your kist at the open door
When I come doon wi' the cairt at the term for you.

THE GOLDEN AGE

I'LL leave you the lasses that's still i' their teens,
Lang-haired an' reid-cheekit, short-coatit an' a',
An' maids i' the twenties, tho' cuddlesome queans,—
They've mair skeel o' kissing at thirty-an'-twa.

At forty an' 'oman is easy to please,
Jist shoggle the tree an' she's ready to fa',
Her sense or her smeddum you're welcome to reeze,—
The age for an oxter is thirty-an'-twa.

There's runts syne o' fifty, o' saxty an' mair,
Would hooie their sauls for a kiss an' a clap,
But tho' they've the nowt, an' the notes may be there,
Nae siller mak's up for a shortage o' sap.

Aul' berries are bitter, young grozarts are green,
But mid-wye they're ripe an' the sweetest o' a' ;
To kittle, to coort, for a wife or a frien',
Gie me the dear deemie that's thirty-an'-twa.

AY, FEĞS

Ay, fegs, an' fat dae ye think o' my legs ?

Ye hinna seen me i' my sodger's kilt for weeks,
For aye as I'm mairchin' by, some limmer is sure to cry
" Wi' shanks like that ye'd better hae stuck to breeks."

Na, fegs, they needna lauch at my legs,
For mony a weary fecht they've brocht me
through ;

Ay, fegs, gin't hadna been for my legs
O I would be a cauld corp noo.

Ay, fegs, when the sergeant saw my legs

He was handin' owre the shillin' afore he spoke,
He kent brawly fat ye need to wyde amo' fire an' bleed,
Sae he clappit me on the shou'der an' ca'd me " Jock."

Na, fegs, he didna lauch at my legs,
He kent the weary fechts they'd bring me
through ;

Ay, fegs, gin't hadna been for my legs
O I would be a cauld corp noo.

Eh, man, sic a terrible day was thon,

The bullets an' ba's were fleein' aboot like snaw ;
" Strike oot " they cried " for hame," but the feck o' the lave
was lame,

An' I got there twa days afore them a'.

Ay, fecs, sic a handy thing is your legs,
An' mony a weary fecht they bring you through ;
Na, fecs, gin't hadna been for my legs
O I would be a cauld corp noo.

Ay, fecs, when a cannon ba' grazed my legs
It mindit me upon something I'd forgot,
My auld mither ower the sea, sittin' wearyin' sair for me,
For wha would dibble her kail gin I was shot ?
Ay, fecs, she aye admired my legs,
An' here I'm back i' the Cabrach wi' the coo ;
Na, fecs, gin't hadna been for my legs
O I would be a cauld corp noo.

A' IN A BREIST

At it, a' at it, a' aye at it,

A' in a breist like the wife's ae coo,

Naething can lick ye oonless ye lat it,

Aff wi' your coat than an' intill't noo.

When ye aince start in ye maun never quat it,

Tho' your houghs are sair an' your han's are scrattit ;

Dinna pit aff speirin' " Faur ? " or " Foo ? "

Or coontin' the yarks when ye hardly hat it ;

Tho' your thrapple's dry dinna wait to wat it,

The drink will bide till the wark's a' through :

Ye can tell come nicht hoo ye pech't an' swattit

But doon wi' your heid, man, an' intill't noo.

An' at it, a' at it, a' aye at it,

A' in a breist like the wife's ae coo.

YOKIN' THE MEAR

THE wife has her notions, she greets like a bairn
To think 'at we're sinners an' like to be lost ;
The state o' my sowl is her daily concairn,
When a' I need's something to saddle my host.

She hankers for heaven, I'm canty doon here,
A snod thackit steadin' wi' nowt in the byre,
An' a market on Tysedays for me an' the mear,
Fat mair could a simple aul' fairmer desire ?

She blaws aboot mansions up there in the sky,
But chaps me a deese in a but-an'-a-ben,
An' when there's a meen, a bit daunder doonby
To crack owre a dram amo' fouk 'at I ken.

'Twould only be waste pittin' wings upo' me,
Sae short i' the breath an' sae brosy an' big,
For tho' I could reest I'm owre heavy to flee,
The wife can hae feathers but I'm for a gig.

A grace to the kail, an' the readin' at nicht,
Wi', or I gang forrit, a preachin' or twa,
I'll lippen to that when some gloamin' the vricht
Screws doon the kist lid an' I'm throu' wi' it a'.

Lat her be translatit, but leave me my leen
Wi' plooin' an' sawin' to scutter on here,
I'll ken 'at she's happy herp-herpin' abeen,
An' fussle content when I'm yokin' the mear.

THE TINKLER

GIN I was a sturdy tinkler
Trampin' lang roads an' wide,
An' ye was a beggar hizzie
Cadgin' the country side ;

The meal bags a' your fortune,
A jinglin' wallet mine,
I wouldna swap for a kingdom
Ae blink o' my raggit queyn.

The gowd that hings at your lugs, lass,
I would hammer it for a ring,
Syne Hey for a tinklers' waddin'
An' the lythe dyke-sides o' Spring.

O whiles we would tak' the toll-road
An' lauch at the Norlan' win,'
An whiles we would try the lown roads,
An' the wee hill-tracks that rin.

Whaur the blue peat reek is curlin'
An' the mavis whussles rare,
We'd follow the airt we fancied
Wi' nane that we kent to care.

An' ye would get the white siller
 Spaein' the lasses' hans,
An' I would win the broun siller
 Cloutin' the aul' wives' cans.

Whiles wi' a stroop to souder,
 Girdin' at times a cogue,
But aye wi' you at my elbuck
 To haud me content, ye rogue.

We'd wash in the rinnin' water,
 An' I would lave your feet,
An' ye would lowse your apron
 An' I would dry them wi't.

I'd gaither yows at gloamin'
 An' ye would blaw the fire,
Till the lilt o' the singin' kettle
 Gart baith forget the tire.

An' blithe, my cuttie luntin',
 We'd crack about a' we'd seen,
Wi' mony a twa-han' banter
 Aneth the risin' meen.

Syne in some cosy plantin'
 Wi' fern an' heather spread,
An' the green birks for rafters
 The lift would roof your bed.

THE TINKLER

An' when your een grew weary
Twa stars would tine their licht,
An' saftly in my oter
I'd faul' you for the nicht.

Nae cry frae frichtened mawkin,
Snared in the dewy grass,
Nor eerie oolet huntin'
Would wauken you then, my lass.

An' when the mists were liftin'
An' the reid sun raise to peep,
Ye would only cuddle the closer
An' lauch to me in your sleep.

*Wi' a' the warl' to wander,
An' the fine things yet to see,
Will ye kilt your coats an' follow
The lang, lang road wi' me?*

*The open lift an' laughter—
Is there onything mair ye lack?
"A wee heid in the bundle
That shouds upon my back."*

BENNACHIE

THERE'S Tap O' Noth, the Buck, Ben Newe,
 Lonach, Benrinnes, Lochnagar,
Mount Keen, an' mony a Carn I trow
 That's smored in mist ayont Braemar.
Bauld Ben Muich Dhui towers, until
 Ben Nevis looms the laird o' a' ;
But Bennachie ! Faith, yon's the hill
 Rugs at the hairt when ye're awa' !

Schiehallion,—ay, I've heard the name—
 Ben More, the Ochils, Arthur's Seat,
Tak' them an' a' your hills o' fame
 Wi' lochans leamin' at their feet ;
But set me doon by Gadie side,
 Or whaur the Glenton lies by Don—
The muir-cock an' the whaup for guide
 Up Bennachie I'm rivin' on.

Syne on the Mither Tap sae far
 Win'-cairdit clouds drift by abeen,
An' wast owre Keig stands Callievar
 Wi' a' the warl' to me, atween.
There's braver mountains owre the sea,
 An' fairer haughs I've kent, but still
The Vale o' Alford ! Bennachie !
 Yon is the Howe, an' this the Hill !

GLOSSARY

BLAUD =to spoil.
 Bourach =a cluster, small crowd.
 Branks =a halter
 Busk =dress, adorn.

Caff =chaff.
 Chaps me =exclamation when
 one person chooses a particu-
 lar thing.

Chessel =cheese vat, cheese press.
 Chouks =cheeks, neck.
 Cogue =wooden vessel.
 Connached =wasted.
 Coupit the ladle =played see-saw.
 Clyack =when the last sheaf is
 cut in harvest.

Crined =grown small through
 old age.

Croose i' the craw =brisk and
 confident in conversation.

Cuttie =short tobacco pipe.

Darg =day's work.

Deese =a long settle.

Doddy mittens =worsted glove
 without separate division for
 the four fingers.

Doited =in dotage.

Drokit =drenched.

Dryster =miller's man.

Earock =a fowl of the first year.

Furhooied =forsaken.

Fulpie =puppy, whelp.

Fykie =troublesome.

Gang forrit =attend Communion.

Girdin' =putting on hoops.

Gizzen =shrivelled up.

Gorbels =unfledged birds.

Gorbell't =when young bird par-
 tially formed.

Gushets =triangular pieces of
 land.

Hish into the ree =drive into the
 fowl run.

Hooie =barter.

Hypothec, hale =whole concern.

Jinkit =dodged.

Kepp =catch, intercept.

Kist =chest, coffin.

Kitchie his piece =put something
 on oatcake to make it more
 palatable.

- Kittle = to tickle.
 Kittle to ca' = troublesome to drive.
 Lames = broken pieces of earthenware.
 Leamin' = gleaming.
 Ley = lea.
 Lippen = trust.
 Lochans = small lochs.
 Luntin' = smoking.
 Mason's mear = trestle for scaffolding.
 Mislipped = deceived.
 Mochie = muggy, misty.
 Mowse = nae mowse = no matter of jesting, not safe.
 Onwal = annual.
 Pig = earthenware jar or hot water bottle.
 Ploy = frolic, escapade.
 Pooshan = poison.
 Queet = ankle.
 Ragie = raging, scolding.
 Ree = fowl run.
 Reest = roost.
 Riddels = sieves.
 Ringel e'en = wall-eyed.
 Runts = withered old women.
 Scrogs = stunted bushes.
 Shank = stocking in process of being knitted.
 Sharger = a stunted person or animal.
 Sheet = shoot.
 Shillans = grain freed from husks.
 Shoggle = to shake.
 Shouds = swings.
 Skites = flies off quickly.
 Soo = rectangular stack of hay or straw.
 Souder = to solder.
 Spainyie = cane.
 Stag-moss = alpine club moss.
 Steen-chackert = stone-chat.
 Stroop = a spout.
 Swacker = nimbler.
 Swye = pivoted rod in chimney for hanging pots.
 Teen = tune ; ill teen = bad humour.
 Teemin' his girns = emptying his snares.
 Theats = traces.
 Wan' = wand, fishing-rod.
 Wersh = tasteless.
 Wyte = blame.
 Wyver = a spider.
 Youkie = itchie.
 Yows, yowies = fir cones.
 Yowes = ewes.

 KR-499-385

